

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 SS-15 AID-01 NSC-06 /034 W
-----057571 180008Z /23

R 171210Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6339
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5263

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (STAFFDEL/HAUSMAN)
SUBJECT: INVESTIGATION OF ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN
LUTHER KING

REF: LISBON 4848 AND PREVIOUS

1. ON JULY 12, 1978, CONOFF MAISH APPEARED WITH PERMISSION OF THE COURT TO AUDIT THE TESTIMONY OF MARIA MANUELA DA GRACA NUNES TEXEIRA LOPES, A PORTUGUESE EMPLOYEE OF THE CANADIAN EMBASSY IN LISBON WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE ISSUANCE OF A CANADIAN PASSPORT TO RAMON GEORGE SNEYD ALSO KNOWN AS JAMES EARL RAY. WHEN CONOFF APPEARED SHE WAS INFORMED BY THE CLERK OF COURT THAT BECAUSE OF OBJECTIONS BY THE CANADIAN EMBASSY, SHE WOULD BE UNABLE TO ATTEND HEARINGS AS SHE HAD DONE PREVIOUSLY (REFTEL).

2. CONOFF O'NEILL CALLED ON CANADIAN CHARGE, RAY EDWARD CALDWELL, JULY 13 WHO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD OBJECTED TO PRESENCE OF ANYONE, INCLUDING US OFFICIALS, DURING LOPES'S TESTIMONY SINCE HE HAD BEEN DENIED PERMISSION TO ATTEND. HE ALSO CONFIRMED THAT ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM OTTAWA, MRS. LOPES HAD REFUSED TO HONOR TWO PREVIOUS SUMMONS TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY UNTIL FINED AND THREATENED WITH ARREST. THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAD PREVIOUSLY CLAIMED LIMITED DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY FOR MRS. LOPES WITH REGARD TO ALL HER ACTIONS WHILE
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WORKING FOR THE CANADIAN EMBASSY AND REQUESTED THAT THE SUBPOENA BE WITHDRAWN. THE CANADIAN EMBASSY HAD HOPED THAT THE COURT WOULD UPHOLD SUCH CLAIMS.

3. ON JULY 12, MRS. LOPES ANSWERED ONLY THOSE QUESTIONS WHICH REFERRED TO HER NAME, DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, AND OCCUPATION. ON INSTRUCTIONS, SHE REFERRED ALL OTHER QUESTIONS TO THE

CANADIAN EMBASSY. CALDWELL SAID IT WAS UNFAIR TO ASK SOMEONE TO COMMENT ON SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO WHICH COULD ONLY BE A BLUR IN HER MOMORY AND THAT IF REQUIRED TO DO SO WOULD REQUIRE REFERENCE TO OFFICIAL CANADIAN FILES WHICH HE EMPHASIZED WERE "CLOAKED BY DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY."

4. IN RESPONSE TO CONOFF O'NEILL'S QUESTION, CALDWELL SAID THAT HE WOULD FORWARD TO OTTAWA ANY REQUEST, CONVEYED BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE, FOR TESTIMONY FROM MRS. LOPES IN THE CANADIAN EMBASSY IN THE PRESENCE OF CANADIAN EMBASSY PERSONNEL. CALDWELL NOTED THAT THERE WERE US/CANADIAN DIPLOMATIC AND POLICE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IF APPROACHED WOULD BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE. CALDWELL EMPHASIZED THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT TO DRAW PUBLIC ATTENTION AGAIN, HOWEVER SLIGHT, TO THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE JAMES EARLY RAY MATTER AND THE LAX WAY IN WHICH CANADIAN PASSPORTS USED TO BE ISSUED.

5. CALDWELL ALSO STRESSED THAT IF THE COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS WANTED TO TAKE TESTIMONY FROM MRS. LOPES, THE CANADIAN EMBASSY WOULD REQUIRE, IN ADVANCE:

- LIST OF INTERROGATORIES;
- NAME OF INTERVIEWER, AND;
- AN INDICATION OF WHETHER MRS. LOPES COULD BE PLACED UNDER OATH.

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6. PLEASE ADVISE.
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LISBON05263
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780293-0759
Format: TEL
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780753/aaaabsjj.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c8ee7f72-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LISBON 4848
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1988077
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INVESTIGATION OF ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING
TAGS: OREP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c8ee7f72-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014